

By Sarah Bleau
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Congressman Sanford Bishop and Sec. of Agriculture Tom Vilsack visit FUEL to discuss how Southwest Georgia is an innovator for the nation's clean energy movement

CAMILLA, GA -- The national government is cooking up plans for a Camilla ethanol plant.

Congressman Sanford Bishop brought Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack to tour First United Ethanol and talk about their plan to expand Southwest Georgia's renewable energy efforts to a national level.

"I've been to a few ethanol facilities in my day and it's obvious that this is a team that understands the need to look ahead," says Secretary of Agriculture Tom Vilsack.

Vilsack says the cleanliness and technology of the Camilla facility impressed him and is excited to work on more innovation with the company.

"It's always good, it's human nature, somebody pats you on the back and says you're all doing a good job, you feel a little better about it. We know that we're making an impact on the national use of oil," says First United Ethanol, LLC (FUEL) CEO Murray Campbell.

Bishop and Vilsack say China currently leads in the clean energy race, and the use of foreign oil needs to end.

"We have a broad portfolio which can in fact help us to be energy independent and self sufficient," says Bishop.

Vilsack says southwest rural Georgia will play a key part in helping to move America to use renewable energy resources. He says not only will it benefit the environment, it will also benefit our economy.

“It’s important that people understand this industry is still in its infancy. It still needs help and support but the support the ethanol industry gets is about a tenth of what the petroleum industry gets and the job creation opportunities are enormous,” says Vilsack.

Vilsack says by expanding FUEL’s efforts, it will create \$95 billion in capital investment and one million “good paying” jobs.

“The beauty of this is that one biofuel refinery is not going to service three or four states. It may be lucky if it services two or three counties so you’re going to have these dotting the entire rural landscape at a time when we’re desperately in need of jobs in rural America,” says Vilsack.

Rural America is primarily supported by farmers who grow crops for food.

“Now, we’re also able to have our farmers come to our help and produce fuel, which I think is going to take us to a new level that is going to assure the United States maintains its place as a super power in the global marketplace,” says Bishop.

Currently, the U.S. produces approximately 12 billion gallons of ethanol biofuel. Vilsack and Bishop say the goal is to increase that to 36 billion gallons by 2022.